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MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

During my meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on October 1, 1962, the question arose as to the contingencies under which military action against Cuba may be necessary and toward which our military planning should be oriented. The following categories would appear to cover the likely possibilities:

(a) Soviet action against Western rights in Berlin calling for a Western response including among other actions a blockade of Communist or other shipping enroute to Cuba.

(b) Evidence that the Castro regime has permitted the positioning of bloc offensive weapon systems on Cuban soil or in Cuban harbors.

(c) An attack against the Guantanamo base, or against U.S. planes or vessels outside Cuban territorial air space or waters.

(d) A substantial popular uprising in Cuba, the leaders of which request assistance in recovering Cuban independence from the Castro Soviet puppet regime.

(e) Cuban armed assistance to subversion in other parts of the Western Hemisphere.

(f) A decision by the President that affairs in Cuba have reached a point inconsistent with continuing U.S. national security.

May I have the views of the Chiefs as to the appropriateness of the above list of contingencies and answers to the following:

(a) The operational plans considered appropriate for each contingency.

(b) The preparatory actions which should now and progressively in the future be undertaken to improve U.S. readiness to execute these plans.

(c) The consequences of the actions on the availability of forces and on our logistics posture to deal with threats in other areas, i.e., Berlin, Southeast Asia, etc.

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We can assume that the political objective in any of these contingencies may be either:

(a) the removal of the threat to U.S. security of Soviet weapon systems in Cuba, or

(b) the removal of the Castro regime and the securing in the island of a new regime responsive to Cuban national desires.

Inasmuch as the second objective is the more difficult objective and may be required if the first is to be permanently achieved, attention should be focused upon a capability to assure the second objective.

I have asked ISA to initiate discussion with State as to the political actions which should precede or accompany the various military actions being planned.

SIGNED

Robert S. McNamara

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